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NATION

King's Widow Presents 'New

Family Seeks Investigation by Special Federal Panel

By MICHAEL A. FLETCHER
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The widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. yesterday met with Attorney General Janet Reno to present what she called "new evidence" of a conspiracy in her husband's assassination in hopes of persuading the federal government to re-examine the crime.

Coretta Scott King met for more than two hours with Reno to press the case for appointment of a federal panel, styled on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that would have subpoena power and could grant immunity to potential witnesses.

"New witnesses have come forth who have never been investigated," King said, adding that their testimony should be heard by a formal, unbiased commission.

Emerging from the private meeting in Reno's conference room, King said the attorney general listened "very sympathetically" and promised to get back to her family about the request.

The meeting with Reno marked the most serious interest the federal government has taken in the assassination since Congress investigated the matter two decades ago.

King first made a public request that President Clinton appoint a commission to examine evidence in the case last week, just two days before the 30th anniversary of her husband's April 4, 1968, assassination. At the time, she said, "mounting evidence" supported James Earl Ray's claim that he was set up as the patsy in the King murder.

The assassination has been investigated

by a congressional committee and numerous local law enforcement agencies, all of which have concluded that Ray was the shooter. The congressional inquiry left open the possibility that Ray may have been assisted by others, but rejected the notion of a government conspiracy. At her news conference last week, King issued a news release offering a series of alleged facts that have accumulated in the past several years—many of which have been examined, and dismissed, in previous inquiries.

King was joined at the meeting by two of her children, Dexter and Bernice King; former U.N. ambassador Andrew Young, who was a top aide to her husband; and former D.C. delegate Walter Fauntroy, who helped lead the congressional investigation of the assassination and has long believed that King died as the result of a conspiracy.

Ray pleaded guilty to the murder in 1969 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. But he recanted his plea three days later. Since then, he and his various attorneys have spun a series of scenarios about the case. Many former King confidants have long speculated that King's assassination grew out of a conspiracy, although they stop short of absolving Ray. Many suspect government complicity in King's death, noting that King was hated and harassed by then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Likewise, much of the American public is skeptical about the assassination. A poll taken for CBS News last month found that only one in 10 Americans believe Ray acted alone.

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THE WASHINGTON POST

Evidence' of Conspiracy to Reno



BY ROBERT A. REEDER—THE WASHINGTON POST

Coretta Scott King appears with son Dexter, right, and former U.N. ambassador Andrew Young after her meeting with the attorney general.